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THE BAPTIST Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

1st person: God's grace bringing Kingdom

By Dana Seale
IMB Missionary to Venezuela

MARACAIBO, Venezuela (IMB) — Logically, nothing fit. It was too far away. There weren't very many of them and besides, we had heard they weren't open to the gospel. Yet, we decided to go anyway.

Poverty and illiteracy are a mean marriage. Malnutrition, parasites, poor hygiene, and alcoholism were all taking their toll on this small unreached Venezuelan people group called the Yukpa.

A woman who had gone with us began to share the good news of the gospel with a man who was a village leader. After a lengthy presentation, she paused to catch her breath.

"Have you heard all of this before?" she asked.

"No," he answered. "We have never heard any of what you are saying. We live in darkness."

Darkness? God had wanted us to hear the very word that would speak to our hearts.

The man stared back at us with interest and then invited us to keep coming back to explain these things to them. Maybe they weren't so closed after all!

Where does one start to teach and show God's love? As a medical doctor, the physical needs first cried out to my husband Paul.

We started with medical crusades. Medical and dental volunteers from all over the United States began to help us. More and more communities began to surface. "Please come to my



LOVING TOUCH — Southern Baptist missionary physician Paul Seale examines a child during one of the medical evangelism projects among the Yukpa in Venezuela. Medical and dental crusades have opened the door for a gospel witness among the Yukpa, a tribe in remote, mountainous areas unaware of the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ. The Mississippi Baptist Convention is also providing a witness in the South American country through the Mississippi/Venezuela Baptist Partnership. (IMB photo)

village too!" they pleaded.

Southern Baptist world hunger funds were granted to cover the base of the aqueducts for a new water system, and for the educational project.

The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering allowed us to get a pick-up conversion that would accommodate our four children and the rugged roads we had to travel to get to the base of the mountains.

Volunteers began signing up from everywhere.

We now have new works in eight different villages, and 94 people have been baptized. Five clean water supply systems have been built, and people are beginning to hear the Word of God on a regular basis.

This is not to say everything is perfect yet. Life is not that easy — and rarely promises to be. As with everything else in this world, there are still a lot of kinks to work out. The necklaces didn't get tangled overnight, nor will they be

untangled that quickly, but the sun is rising over the dark rain forests of the Andes Mountains. Light is beginning to penetrate the darkness.

A logical calling? Maybe not, but on target? Absolutely. The cry for help made that clear. We are responding the best way we know how.

By the grace of God, the Kingdom is coming even to the Yukpa.

HELP!
THEIR CRY
OUR CALL

HELP!
THEIR CRY
OUR CALL

The Week of Prayer for
International Missions
Nov. 30—Dec. 7, 1997

WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

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B&H tops in Spanish Bibles

In just 12 years, Broadman & Holman (B&H), the publishing arm of the Baptist Sunday School Board, has become the largest publisher of Spanish Bibles sold through trade stores, with Spanish Bible sales comprising 36% of B&H Bible sales. Only the Bible societies which distribute low-cost Spanish Bibles and Bible portions through churches, ministries and individuals publish a larger volume of Spanish Bibles.

Sixty percent of B&H Spanish Bible sales take place outside the country, with Mexico and Argentina representing the top Latin American markets.

Most popular B&H Spanish Bibles include: Biblia de Letra Grande, Tamano Manual (hand-size giant print Bible), Biblia de Letra Grande con Referencias (giant print reference Bible), and Biblia Ultrafina con Referencias (Ultra-thin reference Bible).

B&H currently markets its language resources in the United States through the annual Christian Booksellers Association convention and its Spanish products at Expo-lit held each May in Miami. In 1998, B&H will co-sponsor book fairs in Panama in February and Santiago, Chile, in August.

Looking back

10 years ago

In response to trends that are restricting opportunities for traditional missionaries to enter many foreign countries, the Foreign Mission Board considers a proposal to send professionals into restricted countries to work as teachers or technologists while living a Christian witness.

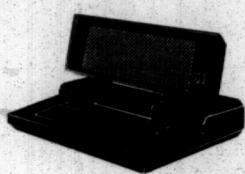
20 years ago

Russell Dilday, pastor of the Second Ponce de Leon Baptist Church in Atlanta is elected the sixth president of Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth. He succeeds Robert Naylor, who will become president-emeritus upon his imminent retirement.

50 years ago

Main Street Church, Hattiesburg sets a goal of subscribing the 1948 budget of \$70,000 in one day. At the close of the evening service on that day, 1,136 people subscribed \$78,122.23. At the same time, 629 people pledged to begin tithing.

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The most important season of all

When an article in The Baptist Record vaguely describes certain Southern Baptist missionaries as "...serving with an unreached people group..." in a distant corner of the world, we need to understand what that means.

It means those God-called brothers and sisters in Christ and their families are living in some of the most primitive cultures on the globe, among people who have never before heard the name of Jesus. Many of the people have never seen a Bible, because there isn't a Bible in their language.

It means grappling with other religions established hundreds (and sometimes thousands) of years ago, firmly entrenched in the culture and in the minds of the people. It means humbling oneself to local traditions just to get an opening to share the gospel.

It means serving under hostile conditions, subject to repressive theocracies or atheistic bureaucrats. For some, it encompasses the constant threat of exposure and possible imprisonment.

For others, it means serving with the real possibilities of injury or death at the hands of common criminals in a lawless society or common thugs in a lawless government. It means dashing for the border, chased by a hail of bullets as a country sinks into anarchy.

It means dealing with deadly diseases that have long since

been wiped out of our lives or have not yet reached our shores. It means the medicine to fight dangerous infections — or even something as simple as stepping on a rusty nail — is on the other side of the world.

It means months of separation from their children, who must attend boarding schools hundreds of miles away to get an adequate education. It means missing every milestone in the lives of their adult children and their grandchildren back in the States.

It means giving up the creature comforts we take for granted in the western world, such as 24-hour electricity, pure water, two cars in the garage, safe food, and established churches.

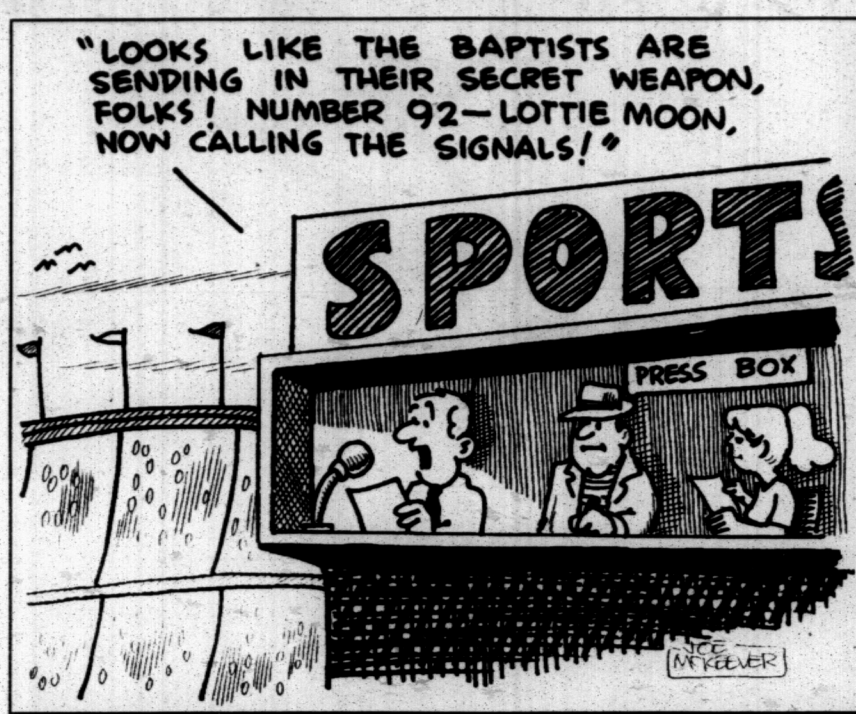
It means giving up everything for the cause of Christ.

These are the missionaries we support when we give to the Lottie Moon Offering for International Missions.

They are not faceless poster children for some well-intentioned, if nebulous, charity. They are real people. They have names. They have lives. Their mission could not be more important, and they need our support.

Any veteran of a foreign war will attest to the importance of knowing the people back home are behind the troops as they fight for their country, thousands of miles from home. How much more important, then, is our support for the "troops" fighting the battle for the Great Commission, thousands of miles from home?

Make no mistake — it is a battle in every sense of the word. Lottie Moon understood



that and literally gave her life for the cause.

God has granted Southern Baptists the greatest missionary-sending system in the Christian world, and not without reason. He knows we have the resources to support that system.

First, we have the spiritual resources to support our missionaries through earnest and constant prayer. Secondly, we have the financial resources to bring their ministries to life.

Pray without ceasing for our missionaries. Once that is accomplished and our hearts are made right with God through those prayers, he will provide the resources and lead us in the giving of those resources to support the work his precious Son left for us to finish.

The annual Season of Prayer

for International Missions is here. Of all the seasons declared for this time of year, none is more important than the Season of Prayer for International Missions.

Our missionaries on the front lines understand that, and we should too.

HELP!

THEIR CRY OUR CALL

**The Week of Prayer for
International Missions
Nov. 30—Dec. 7, 1997**

So you've been elected to serve on the Pastor Search Committee! What an important job!

You may have noticed in The Baptist Record, in the first part of the year, there were some suggested questions to ask a potential pastor. I have never served on a Pastor Search Committee, but I have been interviewed by committees a few times.

After you have asked all your questions, what are you going to tell them about your church? It has been my experience as a pastor that the Pastor Search Committee did not always tell me all I needed to know.

I didn't feel that they were dishonest with me, but I do feel they should have shared more detailed information.

I now serve as a Director of Missions and have the privilege of working and training Pastor Search Committees. Let me make a few suggestions:

◆ How long do you expect this relationship to last? The answer sounds so easy: Until the Lord leads elsewhere. In reality, it seems the mindset of some of our churches toward the pastor's tenure is two years at the most.

The Pastor Search Committee should look at the track record of their church to see if this mindset is present. If so, why? Many churches are stagnant because of

GUEST OPINION:



Search with integrity

*By Archie Herrin, Director of Missions
Walthall Association*

short pastorates.

◆ What are the church's "sacred cows"? More ministers get into trouble because they try to change things that the church will not or is not willing to change.

Minister after minister fall into the same trap. The Pastor Search Committee needs to ask themselves, "Do we have 'sacred cows'?" If so, tell the potential minister.

◆ Who is the "power structure" of the church? Don't misunderstand — every church must have a "power structure." If not, nothing would ever get done. The "power structure" does not have to be destructive.

Do the deacons call the shots? Does a particular family call the shots? Does a particular person call the shots? These are difficult questions that need to be answered honestly.

◆ How is the pastor/minister paid? With all the changes taking place, it is

essential that churches set up an acceptable way of paying their staff. The law requires a W-2 form to withhold and pay matching Social Security on the non-ordained staff. The reimbursable accounts must be just that. The pastor/staff cannot tell the church how to pay them according to Internal Revenue Service regulations. The Pastor Search Committee needs to have approved, by the church, how the minister is to be paid.

◆ To whom is the pastor/minister accountable? I know it is "to the Lord," but ministers must build integrity with those to whom they are accountable. The Pastor Search Committee should share this information with the potential minister.

◆ What is the "health" of the church? If there are problems within the fellowship, let the potential minister know the nature of the problems. He will be better able to help the church work through problems if he has knowledge.

◆◆◆

The Pastor Search Committee can do wonders in helping the church before a call is extended.

Be people of integrity! Be honest in all your dealings with potential ministers. God will always bless if we are honest with each other and with him.

Missionaries appointed at NOBTS service

By Debbie Moore
New Orleans Seminary

NEW ORLEANS (BP) — A desire that began three years ago became a reality Nov. 17-21 when New Orleans Seminary (NOBTS) hosted the Southern Baptist Convention's International Mission Board (IMB) personnel, trustees, 55 candidates for appointment and their family and friends during a global missions emphasis week.

Although every three years IMB teams regularly travel to each of the six Southern Baptist Convention seminaries for a global missions emphasis week, this occasion was the first to feature both the 90-member IMB trustee meeting and a missionary candidate appointment service, with one of the largest groups of candidates ever to be sent out at one time for global missions service.

Seminary students and their children participated from morning to evening in the week-long events. IMB personnel hosted breakfast, lunch, and dinner meals to meet and pray with students and be available on an informal basis to answer their questions; spoke in classes; taught special multimedia seminars; and transformed the Hardin Student Center into an

extravaganza of international sights and sounds with 16 cultural displays, Internet-accessible computer centers and scores of flags draped throughout the building's two-story atrium.

"Around the World in 80 Minutes," a first-time special event just for children, allowed youngsters to meet missionaries; dress in indigenous costumes; and learn games, songs, and customs of children from nations around the world.

Featured in the daily chapel services were Jerry Rankin, IMB president; David Garrison, IMB associate vice president for strategy coordination and mobilization; and Bob Sjogren, a Presbyterian, founder of the missions agency Frontiers and speaker-at-large for Advancing Churches in Mission Commitment, based in Mesa, Ariz.

Rankin challenged students to question their call to ministry if they have never considered a call to missions.

"Our greatest sin may be that we think we see" what ministry is all about "yet all the while we are blind to God's world," he said.

Rankin said having grown up in Mississippi, his own provincialism kept him blind for many years as he interpreted



CALLED TO SERVE — David Bennett (at far right microphone), with his wife, Sharon, tells how he came to leave his position as auditor/investigator for the U.S. Department of Justice to enter international mission service. He and 54 others appointed to mission service last week in Leavell Chapel at New Orleans Seminary. (Photo by Debbie Moore/NOBTS)

ed the will of God "only as I had seen it demonstrated."

"We have our theology tied up in a neat little package. We think we understand God's will. We think our neat little office and our little church that nurtures us so well is the world."

Yet ministers are neglecting multitudes, he said, such as Asia, where "it is incomprehensible to understand just how many are regimented, brainwashed, isolated, in starvation, and totally unaware of the gospel and the rest of the world."

"That world is the world that God would have us to see," not just massive population statistics, demographics and geographics.

"See the masses striving with futility for karma, in spiritual darkness, caught in the grip of untruths."

"That's the world that God knows. That's the world that God loves."

Of the 16 million people who call themselves Southern Baptists, Rankin said "less than 5% will ever consider that God

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may want them to go" and serve him in a global missions capacity.

Referring to the candidates waiting to be appointed Nov. 19, Rankin said while this was one of the largest groups ever to be appointed, "hundreds of other requests for help are going unfilled."

Bob Sjogren, echoing Rankin's comments, said, "(God is) writing a whole new chapter in world evangelization. Christianity used to be an Anglo religion. It's now an African religion, a South American religion, an Asian religion."

"The Great Commission is so do-able right now. We could easily see the world evangelized in our lifetime," Sjogren stressed.

"God forbid you should say 'No' to the world," he said.

MC begins second campaign year

Mississippi College (MC) raised \$57.6 million in the first year of its biggest fundraising effort in school history, entitled "A New Dawn." WorldCom president and CEO Bernie Ebbers, an alumnus of the Baptist college, announced the campaign results during recent homecoming activities.

Last year Ebbers, who is a member of the MC board of trustees and chairman of "A New Dawn," launched the five-year fundraising effort. The money is being used to expand facilities, academic programs, student scholarships, faculty development, and other goals at the college.

An anonymous \$25 million gift last year gave the fund-raising campaign a head start. This year, Ebbers announced that another anonymous gift of \$8.2 million has just been pledged. "It is nothing short of phenomenal," said MC President Howell W. Todd. "Every member of the college's Board of Trustees has contributed

to the fund drive. As a group, they have given several million dollars. We are also proud of our 93% participation rate among our faculty and staff. They have shown their overwhelming support and commitment to our mission through their work and their contributions to the campaign."



Speaking to hundreds of alumni and college supporters, Ebbers said the campaign's strong showing is characteristic of MC alumni. He observed that the spiritual component was increasingly important in the success.

"There is a spiritual principle that always works, if we step out in faith, (God) provides," said Ebbers.

The "A New Dawn" campaign has already sparked a building boom and campus renaissance, including construction of a new men's residence hall, a combination medical/health/fitness center, and renovation of the existing Alumni Hall.



DIFFERENT LIFESTYLES — Mississippians Alvin (left) and Mary (right) Doyle, IMB missionaries to Nigeria since 1991, show children some Nigerian cultures, clothes and instruments and teach them songs and games as part of an "Around the World in 80 Minutes" missions adventure for children at New Orleans Baptist Seminary Nov. 19. Both Alvin and Mary are from Picayune where Alvin was an administrator in the public school system. He later pastored Puckett Church, Rankin Association. (Photo by Debbie Moore/NOBTS)

The Road to Everlasting Life



God intends for all his children to live with him forever, but the road to everlasting life is blocked. To find that road you must:

Admit that you are a sinner.
There is none righteous, not even one. (Rom. 3:10)

Accept God's love for you.
God demonstrates his own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Rom. 5:8)

Acknowledge Christ as Lord.
If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you shall be saved. (Rom. 10:9)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Mississippi Baptist Church for spiritual guidance.

State conventions convene around country

KENTUCKY
Representation change falls short

LEXINGTON, Ky. (BP) — A constitutional change in the way churches gain representation to Kentucky Baptist Convention (KBC) annual meetings failed to get the two-thirds majority vote needed for adoption Nov. 12.

Impetus for the change came from moderates who want to continue full participation in the KBC but don't want to continue sending undesignated offerings to the Southern Baptist Convention.

However, the wording of the proposed change not only would have allowed moderates to give to the KBC without giv-

ing to the SBC, it would have allowed conservatives to give more money designated directly to the SBC without the KBC taking a percentage out, according to KBC president Floyd Price.

WEST VIRGINIA
W. Va. continues boosting Cooperative Program giving

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (BP) — West Virginia Baptists continued an upward swing in Cooperative Program support of Southern Baptist Convention national and international missions and ministries during their Nov. 7-8 annual meeting.

Messengers adopted a record budget of \$1,866,156 for 1998, a

4% increase over '97. They also approved raising the percentage of undesignated receipts for SBC causes from 35 to 35.5%. The convention moved from 29.5% to 35% this year.

TENNESSEE
Relationships study group reports

JACKSON, Tenn. (BP) — A near-record 2,155 messengers heard an executive board report of the formation of a reconciliation-oriented committee on church-laity-clergy relationships during the Tennessee Baptist Convention's (TBC) 123rd session, Nov. 11-12 at West Jackson Church, Jackson.

Messengers, comprising the second-largest registration, after 2,286 registered at Gatlinburg in 1992, approved a record Cooperative Program budget of \$30,105,514, a \$1.9 million increase, or 6.8%, over the current budget. The 1997-98 budget continues to allocate 37.5% for Southern Baptist Convention causes and 62.5% for TBC causes.

NORTHWEST
Northwest convention starts year of jubilee

TACOMA, Wash. (BP) — Southern Baptists in the Northwestern United States began a year-long celebration of its 50th anniversary with a dramatic display of its mission impact around the world.

The theme, "Northwest

Jubilee, 50 Years on Mission," was presented to 444 messengers and 62 guests at the Nov. 11-12 annual meeting at the Tacoma Convention Center.

Messengers representing the two-state convention's 421 congregations and 80,000 members approved a budget of \$4.4 million for 1998, about 6% above this year. Cooperative Program receipts are projected at \$2.3 million, with 31% going for missions and ministries through the Southern Baptist Convention nationally and internationally, excluding Northwest convention building debt payments. The percentage is the same as last year.

MINNESOTA/WISCONSIN
Messengers approve \$1.8 budget

MILWAUKEE (BP) — Resolutions stretched from appreciation to concern at the 14th annual meeting of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention, Nov. 6-8 at Ephesians Church, Milwaukee.

Messengers approved a \$1,826,600 budget for 1998, a 5.5% increase over the current budget. In estimated Cooperative Program giving of \$104,000 for the coming year from the two-state convention's 137 churches and missions, encompassing more than 15,000 members, a 26% allocation is maintained for Southern Baptist Convention missions and ministries in North America and internationally.

NAMES IN THE NEWS



Wade Church, Pascagoula, ordained **Ronnie Castille**, **Ricky Colvin**, and **Matt Wood** as deacons on Oct. 26. Pictured (front row) are Castille, Colvin, and Wood; (second row) Walter Johnson, pastor in Greene County, gave the charge to the deacons; Sam Johnson, student at New Orleans Seminary, gave the charge to the church; and Bill Barton, pastor of Wade Church.

Keith Tarver, Greenville, was ordained on Oct. 19 at Parkview Church, Greenville.

Son of Hilton and Glenda Tarver, he and his wife Kim have three children.

Richie Kimbrough of Saltillo, will be presented in concert at First Church, Saltillo, on Nov. 30 at 7 p.m. Kimbrough, a contemporary Christian singer/song writer, will be performing his newly released songs.



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First Church, Potts Camp, held a deacon ordination service on Nov. 2. Ordained were (front row, from left) **Robert Luther**, **Charles Stone**, **Billy Bowen**, and **Doug Smith**. Also pictured are Chuck Fowler, former pastor of First Church and current pastor of Tula Church, gave the deacon charge; Don Stanfield, director of missions, Lafayette-Marshall Association; moderator; Jim Buchanan, pastor of First Church; Larry West, pastor of Springhill Church, charge to the church.

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ACCEPTING RESUMES: Full-time organist needed. Send resumes to: First Baptist Church, Music Dept., PO Box 249, Raleigh, MS 39153.

PART-TIME MINISTER OF YOUTH: First Baptist Church, Brooklyn. Send resumes to Bro. James Taylor, PO Box 328, Brooklyn, MS 39425.

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POND STOCKERS: Catfish, Carp, Bass, Crappie, Bream: Phone (601) 267-9859.

PART-TIME MUSIC AND YOUTH direc-

tor needed. Send resumes to Search Committee Chairperson, First Baptist Church, 108 West Lee St., Sardis, MS 38666.

ACCEPTING RESUMES: Part-time Education and Out-Reach Director. Send to: Ingalls Ave. Baptist Church, PO Box 358, Pascagoula, MS 39568-0358.

NEEDED: Part-time or Bi-vocational Music Director. Send resumes to Yale Street Baptist Church PO Box 816, Cleveland, MS 38732.

HEIDELBERG STAINED GLASS, Meridian. Design, Fabrication, Repair. MURPHY ROBE SALES. Call (601) 483-7958 or 1-800-368-2705.

DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS-Needed for new association in mid-delta of Mississippi. Resumes are being accepted until December 31, 1997. People skills and self-starting a must. This association will consist of 40 churches and missions. Please respond to: Chairman, DOM Search Committee, 2172 Hiway 446, Skene, MS 38730.

What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

November 27, 1997

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Office of Communication.

1998 CHURCH BUSINESS ADMINISTRATORS CONFERENCES



“keeping your church
OUT of court”



PURPOSE: To provide information on how churches can carefully conduct their affairs under county, state and national laws and do so in a manner that provides some legal insulation from lawsuits.

TARGET AUDIENCE: church business administrators, church staff, personnel committee members, finance committee members, church trustees, legal professionals dealing with issues concerning liabilities of churches and non-profit organizations.

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KEYNOTE SPEAKERS: William R. Korb, Jr., Sheila L. Korb, Michael V. Bourland, all attorneys with Bourland, Smith, Wall & Wenzel law firm in Fort Worth, Texas, and general counsel to Tarrant Baptist Association, Inc. and trust and estate counsel to Baylor University; William Townsend, assistant dean of the Mississippi College School of Law.



WILLIAM KORB



SHEILA KORB

JANUARY 22, 1998
Broadmoor Baptist Church, Jackson
787 E. Northside Drive

9:00 a.m. Registration
9:15 Welcome, Prayer, Introductions
9:20 Session Begins
11:45 Lunch on your own
1:00 p.m. Session continues
3:45 Adjourn

For further information contact: Julius Thompson,
Robin Nichols, or Paul Jones at 800/748-1651
(in Jackson, 968-3800); or Glenn Holder,
First Baptist Church, Madison at 601/856-6177.

JANUARY 23, 1998
Calvary Baptist Church, Tupelo
501 West Main Street

9:00 a.m. Registration
9:15 Welcome, Prayer, Introductions
9:20 Session Begins
11:45 Lunch on your own
1:00 p.m. Session continues
3:45 Adjourn

For further information, contact: Julius Thompson,
Robin Nichols, or Paul Jones at 800/748-1651
(in Jackson, 968-3800); or William Smith, director of mission,
Lee Association, Tupelo at 601/566-1700.



MICHAEL BOURLAND



WILLIAM TOWNSEND

Sponsored by:

Church Administration-Pastoral Ministries and
Church-Minister Relations and Annuity Departments
of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission
Metro Baptist Association, Jackson
Lee Baptist Association, Tupelo

STATE EVANGELISM CONFERENCE

January 19-20, 1998

All Sessions of the State Evangelism Conference will be held at **Alta Woods Baptist Church**, Jackson, except for the Monday evening presentation of "God With Us" which will be held at the **Mississippi Coliseum**.

MONDAY AFTERNOON SESSION – 1:30 P.M.

Personalities:

Ronnie Cottingham, music evangelist, Lucedale
Richard Leach, NAMB,
Chuck Kelley, president, NOBTS
Luther Price, pastor, Riverside BC, Clarksdale

MONDAY EVENING – 7 P.M.

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Sonny Adkins, director

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TUESDAY MORNING – 9 P.M.

Personalities:

Bob Jones, minister of music, Alta Woods, Jackson
Jimmy Furr, Interfaith Witness, Nashville

TUESDAY AFTERNOON – 1:30 P.M.

Personalities:

Bo Parker, music evangelist, Columbia
Jim Butler, pastor, Trinity BC, Southaven
Billy Smith, evangelist, Madison
Charles Carter, senior pastor
Shades Mountain BC, Birmingham

TUESDAY EVENING – 6:30 P.M.

Personalities:

Graham Smith, Singing Churchmen, MBCB
Chuck Kelley
Charles Carter

THINE IS THE KINGDOM: *The Reign of God in Today's World*

SCHEDULE

8:30 a.m.

Registration and Fellowship

9:00 a.m.

Preview of the 1998 Doctrine Study.

THINE IS THE KINGDOM:

The Reign of God in Today's World

led by author, Gene Mims,

vice president for the

Church Growth Group,

the Sunday School Board

Noon

Lunch with Gene Mims



*Advanced registration is necessary
in order to prepare for the meal and to
have enough copies of the
study course book which is to be given
to each participant.*

COST: \$5

*(this includes the preview, the meal,
and a copy of Thine Is the Kingdom:
The Reign of God in Today's World
member book)*

Direct any questions to Don Hicks at:

800/748-1651 (in Mississippi)

968-3800 (in Jackson area)

Fax: 601/968-3928

E-Mail:

Don_Hicks@CompuServe.Com

Family Celebration of Christmas

The Christmas season is an important time in the life of the Church and the individual Christian. The Family Celebration of Christmas plan has been developed in an effort to assist families and churches in focusing on the true meaning of Christmas. In each of this year's remaining issues of **HouseTops** you will find devotions to use weekly during this advent season. We hope these will enrich your family as you seek to keep Christ at the center of the Christmas celebration. Camera-ready copies of each week's devotional are available from the **Department of Student Work** at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530 or call 800/748-1651 or in Jackson, 968-3800.



Meaning and Purpose of Christ's Coming

Keeping Christ in Christmas seems to become more difficult with each passing year. For most people it is just a matter of knowing the meaning of Christmas, a time of worship and celebration. The weeks prior to Christmas can be meaningful as well. Just as Joseph and Mary looked forward to the birth of Jesus and his advent into our world, so do we as we celebrate his birth. This time of anticipation prior to Christmas Day is thus referred to as the season of advent.

Special observance of this time cannot be grasped hastily. The emphasis on waiting, spiritual preparation, and longing for God can put the focus on the real meaning of Christmas as well as unite the family in love, warmth, gratitude and worship.

Celebration of Christ's Coming

A wreath is often used to visualize our thinking and talking about Jesus during special times of fellowship and family worship during this season. The shape of the wreath, with no beginning or end, signifies the eternity of God's creation, and the endlessness of his love and care for man.

The evergreen foliage serves as a reminder that our faith, our hope, and our love are ever alive and come from God and his Son.

Four candles are placed in the wreath, representing the four Sundays prior to Christmas Day. Three of the candles are purple, the color associated with kings and royalty, and one is pink, representing joy. A fifth white candle, placed in the center of the wreath, sometimes referred to as a "Christ candle," is lighted on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. The white symbolizes the purity and sinlessness of Christ's life.

Using this guide

This weekly Family Celebration of Christmas Guide is designed to be used during the four weeks prior to Christmas Day. It may be used at a time and place of the family's choosing.

A wreath may be a part of this special time, serving as a visual aid and point of focus for family members reminding them of the mighty act of God sending his Son into our world as Savior. As a part of this celebration, the lighting of candles each week, which symbolize the key ideas, may be helpful.



Family Celebration of Christmas

Celebration of Peace - The Third Week Before Christmas

We have peace with God through Jesus Christ. The peace the Christ child brought is ours when we accept his forgiveness for our sins. Family members need to understand that the word peace means happy, calm, security, free from arguments. They can understand that people who learn about Jesus and love Jesus have an inner peace. Discuss ways Christmas is celebrated around the world. Ask family members if they have noticed differences among different Christian denominations. Compare this to how non-Christians experience Christmas. What are some differences? If using a wreath, the lighting of the second purple candle in the wreath represents "peace." A total of two purple candles should be lit.



Read: "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Romans 5:1 (NIV)

Additional Readings:

Old Testament: Isaiah 9:6-7
New Testament: Luke 2:8-14

Suggested Family Activities:

Invite the family members to think of something the entire family might do for someone else that would be totally unexpected. For example, raking leaves for a neighbor while they are away, or making a Christmas wreath for their front door, or even decorating their mail box with bolly and ribbon would be gestures of love and thoughtfulness.

Another idea for the family is to draw names and secretly do something nice during the week then reveal the persons the next week during the family worship time.

Sing: "Silent Night"



YOUTH EVANGELISM CONFERENCE



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DECEMBER 29-30, 1997

- Registration begins noon, 29th •
- Conference concludes 3 p.m., 30th •

Ask your youth minister for more details or contact the Evangelism Department, MBCB at 1-800-748-1651.

The correct time for
Area 1 Keyboard Festival at
Colonial Hills Baptist Church, Southaven,
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on Saturday, January 31, 1998.

Pray this day for...

November 28-December 11, 1997

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Discover the Amazing Power of Prayer

"Prayer releases spiritual energy, and seems able even to normalize the aging process. It is not necessary to allow your spirit to sag or grow stale or dull. Prayer can freshen you up every evening and send you out renewed each morning. You can receive guidance in problems if prayer is allowed to permeate your subconscious mind. It also has the power to keep your reactions correct and sound. Prayer releases and keeps power flowing freely."

- Norman Vincent Peale

The Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions Nov. 30-Dec. 7 is sponsored by the WMU. Pray that there will be as much emphasis on prayer for missions as there is on promoting offerings for missions.

Pray for the production of indigenous Christian music in Laos. This could be a powerful tool for cementing sound Christian doctrine in the hearts those believing.

Pray for unity among Christians in Laos concerning the essentials of the faith and the mission before them.

The people of Liberia have elected as president Charles Taylor, one of the leaders of the 7-yr.-long civil war. Pray for guidance for our missionaries and Baptist leaders as they consider rebuilding and re-entry into the country.

Pray for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board Executive Committee Mtg., Baptist Building, 9 am; the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board Mtg., Baptist Building, 10 am

Chinese immigrants continue to arrive in Auckland, New Zealand, from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia & other countries. These new immigrants are usually open to the gospel. Pray for the evangelistic efforts of the 4 Chinese Baptist congregations in Auckland as they seek to evangelize these families.

A Christian businessman in Japan has been living away from his family for 3 years. He commutes 4 hours by train once a month to visit them. He is suffering health problems due to stress. Pray that his faith will be strengthened because of these trials and that he will discover how to share Christ with his fellow workers.

The NAMB, SBC, will sponsor a banquet at the close of the United Nations session Dec. 12. Michael Huckabee, Gov. of Ark., will be the keynote speaker. The banquet's purpose is to present the Gospel to world leaders. NAMB will have for each world leader a Bible in his/her own language. Pray that each leader will desire to be present at this banquet.

Pray for a small team of Christian leaders who are developing a training program for church leaders in Vietnam. Ask the Lord to grant them wisdom, cultural understanding and spiritual discernment.

Give thanks to God for the way He is moving among the student population in Taiwan. Pray for more opportunities to share the Good News with students and for more openness among them. Pray for missionaries whose main target group is students.

Pray for the Lord to raise up shepherds for the churches of Cambodia who will willingly and eagerly care for God's people and teach them by example what it means to faithfully follow Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd.

Pray for a group of young professionals in Jakarta who are studying the Indonesian version of *Experiencing God* as they seek to apply the things they are learning in their daily relationships, especially in the work place.

Pray for a Dominican couple as they work in Briaa del Yuna, a mission church of Bonao, Dominican Republic. Pray that this work will grow to be a constituted church of its own one day.

Pray for improved communications in Guinea. Telephones, facsimiles, and e-mail are not working on a consistent basis.



GA/ACTEENS CAMPUS DAYS



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3 p.m.-7 p.m.

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Church _____ Association _____
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Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Date of Event _____

Deadline: Monday, prior to events

No refunds after deadline, however substitutions may be made

Make checks payable to **Mississippi Baptist Convention Board** and send to:

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Woman's Missionary Union
P. O. Box 530
Jackson, MS 39205-0530

Number of attendees _____ x \$7.50 per person = \$ _____ (total enclosed)

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For over 33 years Baptists in Mississippi have enjoyed sending new suits to the pastors in new work areas. This is our way of letting the pastors in these areas of Southern Baptist life know that we care about and support them in their work. This year we are sending suits to pastors in the Pennsylvania-South Jersey and North and South Dakota Conventions.

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Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

Attention: Brotherhood Department
P.O. Box 530

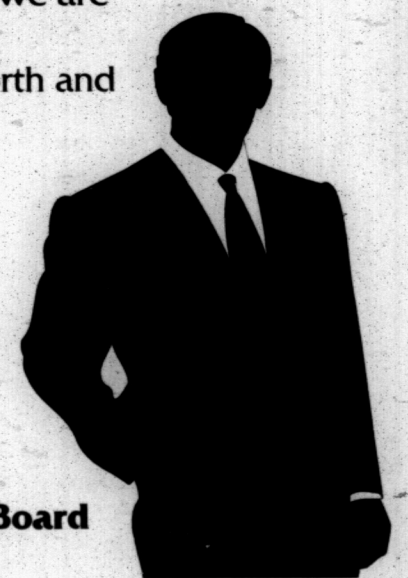
Jackson, MS 39205-0530

Designate on your check: Suit Project

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HOUSE TOPS

JUST FOR THE RECORD



RAs of Highland Church, Vicksburg, recently visited the Truckers Center in Pascagoula and bought "One for the Road" bags to give to the truckers. They also bought and packaged beans and rice to send with the Mississippi College medical mission to Mexico this summer. Pictured (front row) are Benjamin Breazeale, Aaron Purdom, Ryan Richardson, Jay Harper, Lance Ingram, Michael White, Josh Hill, David Cochran; (middle row) Brandon Gibson, Joseph Beard, Dean Hill, John Joseph McKellar, Jason Pugh, John Cochran; (back row) leaders, Amanda Richardson, Ronnie Richardson, Herman Cochran, and Kendell Foster. Mike Gettinger is Brotherhood director and Brian Ivey is pastor.

Simpson Associational Youth Late Night will be held at Strong River Church, Pinola, Nov. 30 at 8:45 p.m. Special guest will be Evangelist Royce Lott. For more information call Steve Walker at (601) 847-4375.

John McBride, director of missions, Copiah Association, will be the featured speaker at Terry Road Church, Jackson, Nov. 30, at the 11 a.m. worship service. James Netherland will be in charge of the music. Dinner will be served in fellow-

ship hall at noon. Lonnie Myrick is pastor.

Mississippi Baptist Medical Center will sponsor a class for Super Sitters, Dec. 20, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., in Busey Auditorium. In Super Sitters, teens age 12-15 can learn ways to make the most of the baby-sitting experience. The class will include information on developmental stages of children, feeding, and safety. Training and certification in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is available, and



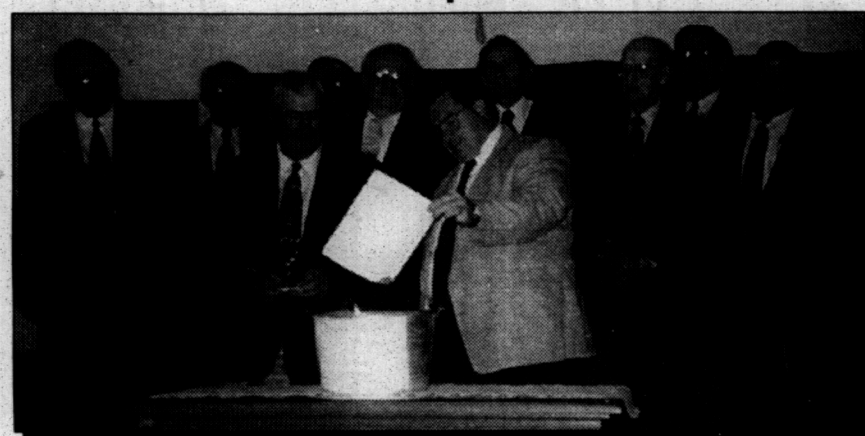
First Church, Potts Camp, recently held a note burning ceremony for a 26 passenger church bus. Pictured (from left) are Glen Humphreys, Johnny Hale, Randy Walker, Dorothy Cook, Art Humphreys, and Jim Buchanan, pastor.

lunch is provided. The course is \$15 per person, with CPR training an additional \$10. To register, or for more information, call (601) 948-6262 or 1-800-948-6262.

New Orleans Seminary will present its annual Christmas concert at 7:30 p.m., Dec. 8, in Leavell Chapel. "A Festival of Carols" will be under the direction of Ken Gabrielse, acting chairman of the Division of Church Music Ministries. For more information, contact the Music Department at (504) 282-4455, ext. 3226.

Lottie Moon Christmas Star, a project of Clarke College Alumni Association, will once again shine on the former Clarke College property, Dec. 6 at 5 p.m. A goal of \$5,000 has been set for this year. Activities including music, testimonies, fellowship, and the lighting of the star will be held at the Alumni Center, at the corner of Scanlan and McMullan Streets. For more information, write James E. Griffith, alumni presi-

dent, at P. O. Box 493, Newton, MS 39345.



Kemper Association recently held a note burning for its associational office. The office, purchased in July 1996, was paid in full 15 months later. The note was burned on Sept. 26 during the annual associational fall meeting. Taking part in the ceremony (from left, foreground) were Jack Davis, vice-moderator; Tim P. Horton, director of missions; (back) Ivor Clark, pastor of West Kemper Church; Curtis Griffin, pastor of Bluff Springs Church; Jerry Jones, pastor of Salem Church; Gilbert Allan, pastor of Dekalb Church; Terry Mayo, pastor of Corinth Church; Gordon Sansing, pastor of Center Ridge Church; Hugh Poole, interim pastor of Blackwater Church; and Randy Caldwell, pastor of Vardaman Church. Kemper Association is composed of 14 churches in East Central Mississippi.



First Church, Coldwater, recently recognized several GAs for completing their Adventure level work. Pictured (front-row) Meagan Boyd, Jennifer Chaney, Micheal Roberson; (second row) Jamie Loe, Jessie Loe, Katherine Loftiss, Jacqueline Poe; (third row) Ashley Deffenbaugh, Megan Loftiss, Jessica Johnson, Ashley Carile; (fourth row) Lindsey Brooks, and Mandy Morgan. Not pictured were Melissa Hadskey and Christin Bryant. Serita Johnson is the GA leader.

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BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS

Staff changes

Friendship Church, McComb, has called **LaVerne Summerlin** as pastor effective Nov. 23. A native of Meridian, Summerlin received his education at Clarke College, Blue Mountain College, and New Orleans Seminary. His previous place of service was First Church, Lake.

Roy Myers, pastor of Meadville Church, Meadville, will retire on Dec. 31. The church will have a retirement reception in his honor on Dec. 7 from 2-4 p.m..

William Carey College will celebrate the beginning of the holiday season with a Community Christmas Celebration, 7 p.m., on Dec. 7 in Smith Auditorium. The Celebration will feature entertainment by Leo Day's Faculty Quartet, the Cuellar and Dubose piano duo, Garlinda's Dance Works, Hattiesburg Children's Chorus and Choral and Instrumental Ensembles from the Winters School of Music. Christmas lighting ceremony is planned for 5:30 p.m. in front of Lawrence Hall. A soup and sandwich dinner will be available in Wilkes Dining Hall. For more information on admission and dinner charges, call (601) 582-6175.

Joe K. McCartney will be presented in a senior voice recital by the Mississippi College Department of Music on Dec. 3 at 3 p.m. in Aven Auditorium. McCartney, son of Lonnie and Mary McCartney of Picayune, is a member of Rocky Creek Church, Lucedale, where he serves as minister of music and youth.

Josef Bayone of Boyce, La., a sophomore at Mississippi College (MC), is the recipient of a UPS Foundation Scholarship. The scholarship is awarded by MC through the Mississippi Foundation of Independent Colleges, Inc. Recommendations for the recipient of the monetary award were made by selected department heads.



Ribbon-cutting ceremonies were held Nov. 1 for the Baptist Healthplex on the campus of Mississippi College (MC). From left are Dick Storie, Healthplex executive director; Harry Vickery, MC board of trustees chairman; Howell W. Todd, MC president; Rosemary Aultman, mayor; Jim Street, chairman of the Board of Baptist Hospital; Gerald Cotton, Mississippi Baptist Health Systems executive vice president; and Nancy Lottridge; Clinton Chamber of Commerce president.

Music Department of Mississippi College will present the Twelfth Annual Festival of Lights, Dec. 4-6, at 8:15 p.m. in Provine Chapel on campus. Other activities include the Concert Chorale presenting the Christmas portion of Handel's "Messiah;" Chamber Choir, premiere per-

formances of James Scater's "A Son is Born: Four Motets for Christmas;" The Naturals, "Carols in the Courtyard" at 7 p.m. in Jennings Hall Courtyard; and the Concert Ringers will begin ringing at 8 p.m. as a prelude to the festival. For more information, call (601) 925-3440.



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LIFE AND WORK

Leading others in prayer

1 King 8:22-24; Acts 4:23-30; 1 Timothy 2:1-2

By Geneva England

Our stately old oak recently crashed to the ground. After many generations, its strength and glory finally succumbed to the forces of nature. Yes, even earth groans under the curse of sin. As tree surgeons ground the mighty tree into sawdust, we marveled at the mystery of life and death because hidden beneath its beauty was a giant hollow. Are our lives similar? Do our exteriors belie the emptiness inside? Perhaps we need to revitalize our prayer and devotional time with the Lord.

One blueprint for prayer uses each letter of the word action: Adore, Confess, Thank, Intercede, our Needs. This emphasizes the five basic elements of prayer: worship,

thanksgiving, confession, petition, and intercession. We should remember always to make our prayer life personal, stay in God's will, and pray in Jesus' name. Additionally, we should pray reverently because we are communicating with our Creator, the one and only Supreme Being, the Lord of Heaven and earth. The Psalmist wrote, "Holy and relevant is his name." (Psalm 111:9). We should never be flippant or disrespectful.

Begin with Praise (1 King 8:22-24). The model prayer recorded in Luke 11 begins with worship of the Heavenly Father. Solomon followed this same pattern in his prayer of Dedication for the magnificent Temple built for the Lord God of



England

Israel. Both prayers praise God as the loving, benevolent father. Solomon singled out God's uniqueness in heaven above and earth below. Likewise, Jesus said, "Hallowed be thy name..." which honors God the Father above all other names. This praises God for what and who he is—his power, wisdom, glory, righteousness, justice, mercy, and longsuffering. Solomon especially praised God for his faithfulness in keeping his promise to David's family.

Perhaps God has blessed you in a special way. Don't forget to thank him, remembering to God belongs all the glory!

Use Scripture (Acts 4:23-26). Having been arrested for preaching the gospel and then released after being threatened, Peter and John joined their Christian friends and related what had happened. All the while, these Christians had been praying for the apostles' release. Excitement and

thanksgiving abounded!

Psalm 2:1-2 had been fulfilled, which describes how kings and rulers would oppose God and his Messiah. They also mentioned the creative account from the Old Testament. We learn from this to use Scripture in our prayers, not necessarily verbatim, but grounded in its meaning.

Present Needs (Acts 4:27-30). Continuing in prayer, these Christians acknowledged God's sovereign will over Herod, Pontius Pilate, and the Jewish crowds in allowing these to question, try, and crucify the Lord Jesus.

Jesus' followers then requested God to protect them while they proclaimed the message of Christ, and they also asked for power to confirm Jesus' words through signs and wonders. Prayer leaders, likewise, should petition God with others' needs as well as their own.

Add Variety (1 Tim. 2:1-2). Several prayer essentials found in 1 Timothy 2:1-2 are thanksgiving, intercessions, and

requests. In addition to praising God's greatness, thanking him for grace and mercy, and interceding for friends and loved ones, we should include government officials, especially that they permit us freedom to worship God. Paul instructed the Philippians, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and petitions, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God" (Phil. 4:6 NIV).

What a great prayer ministry we have when joining with other prayer warriors to intercede on behalf of fellow believers, as well as for the unsaved. A God-honoring prayer life is both a duty and a privilege.

Pray thankfully and specifically. Pray expectantly, believing that God answers prayers. Pray humbly, ever submitting to his will. Pray in the name of Jesus, our blessed Redeemer. Yes, fellow Christians, pray, for God hears us during our "sweet hour of prayer"!

England is a member of First Church, Grenada.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Responding to faithfulness

Genesis 26:1-25

By Jason Bird

Isaac is one of the forgotten Biblical heroes of faith. His father Abraham was a key figure in God's covenant with a nation and much of Genesis deals with Abraham's walk of faith. Isaac's son Jacob also occupies a big portion of Genesis, as God traces his promises to a nation through Jacob's family. Isaac is caught somewhere in between. His journey of faith was not as inspiring as his father's and his life was not nearly as adventuresome as his sons. Yet, Isaac is still an important character in the Bible because he was the heir of God's covenant with Abraham. He lived a quiet life of faith and

had an important role in God's plan for his chosen nation. Isaac's experiences deserve study because they remind us God does not just use those who are flamboyant and full of charisma. God has a plan and a purpose for all who are a part of his family. God demonstrated this by renewing the covenant with Isaac.

Covenant Renewal (26:1-5). Isaac faced many of the same trials his father had experienced before him. Another famine occurred in the land and Isaac needed to move his family where they could survive. Unlike Abraham, however, Isaac did not go to Egypt.



Bird

Instead, he listened to the voice of God and lived where God directed. Going to Egypt may have seemed the prudent thing to do, but God had another plan for the heir to his promise.

We are often faced with difficult decisions like the one Isaac had to make. Tension always exists between living by faith and living by sight. Whenever we are faced with a difficult choice, we must always surrender our will to God's will and realize his plan may not be in agreement with our wisdom. God may have a higher purpose in mind.

God's purpose for Isaac was to continue to fulfill the promise to Abraham through him. Again, God reiterates the promise he made, first to Abraham and now to his son. The promise God made to Isaac is similar to the promise made to Abraham: his

descendants would be as numerous as the stars, they would be given all the land, and through his offspring, all nations on earth would be blessed. God's renewal of this covenant with Isaac shows he was an important part of God's plan, just as important as Abraham was and Jacob would be.

God's Reassurance (26:23-24). Isaac may have wondered if God could use him in such an important role. God appeared to him one night to reassure Isaac. When God told Isaac, "I am the God of your father Abraham," it was more than a statement of fact. It was a reminder that God was faithful. The God who had led Abraham, provided for him and protected him was the same God who would do those things for Isaac as well. God comforted Isaac by telling him clearly, "I am with you."

God never calls us to a task only to abandon us to accom-

plish it alone. Whatever God calls us to do, we can do with the strength and power only he can give. If we feel weak and inadequate, it means we are perfectly suited to serving God. Only then we can know the victories result from his work, not ours.

Response of Worship (26:25). Just as his father before him, Isaac responded to God's graciousness by building an altar and worshiping his Lord. Worship and adoration is a natural response to the goodness of God.

It is amazing that God chooses weak vessels to accomplish important things. As members of the body of the Christ, all believers help to advance the kingdom agenda on earth. We should celebrate that God has chosen us and give our best in service to him.

Bird is pastor, 15th Avenue Church, Meridian.

FAMILY BIBLE SERIES

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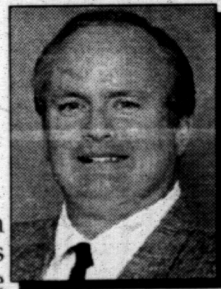
Malachi 2:17-3:18

By Wayne VanHorn

Malachi, whose name means "My Messenger," prophesied to Judah around 433 B.C. The post-exilic audience he addressed was characterized by legalism, ritualism, and exclusivism. Throughout the book of Malachi, God raises an issue, the people dispute God's claim in the form of a question, and then God answers their question with specific sins the people have committed. The book is comprised of six issues raised in the form of questions. Today's lesson deals with two of these issues: "How shall we return (Mal. 3:7)? And 'How have we spoken against thee (Mal. 3:13)?

Decision of Destiny (3:6-7).

Any separation between God and his people had to be explained in the light of the people's sin. This fact is reinforced by the statement "For I the Lord do not change" (3:6). God's immutability insured that he would not destroy his people in spite of their unfaithfulness. The people needed to return to God because they had strayed from him by turning aside from his statutes (3:7a). The Lord provided the only solution, "Return to me, and I will return to you" (3:7b). The people responded, "How shall we return?" In light of the haughty attitude demonstrated by the people within the book of



VanHorn

Malachi and their reluctant attitude, their response here should be seen in a sarcastic light. The people in essence did not want to change the way they were living in order to accommodate God.

Act of Faith (3:8-12).

God exposed the poor attitude of the people by asking a probing question, "Will a man rob God? Yet, you are robbing me." The people, in a sense of denial, replied, "How are we robbing thee?" The Lord declared, "In your tithes and offerings (3:8)." By turning aside from the Lord's statutes regarding the tithe and offerings, the people had robbed him. Consequentially they had wandered from him. Returning to him meant they would have to begin to tithe and give offerings. In their disobedience, God declared that they were "cursed with a curse" (3:9). The

Hebrew term "arar" carries the idea of being bound up and thus rendered unable to come to fruition. The people could never reach their potential as the people of God as long as they disobeyed his statutes. God provided the cure to their problem in Malachi 3:10. The people were to bring the full tithe, and by implication the offerings, to the storehouse. Malachi had in mind the Temple treasury out of which the Levitical priests and Temple officials were sustained. The people were to support the Levites with their financial resources and their produce. In turn, the Levites were to teach the Law of the Lord to the people. In exchange for their faith and obedience in the matter of tithes and offerings, the Lord promised to rebuke the devourer for their sakes (3:11). Anything they lacked as a result of giving a tithe and offering, God would more than

make up in the form of a bountiful harvest or other blessings. Not only would the people be blessed, but outsiders would witness the blessing of God upon them (3:12). When God's people live in obedience to him through faith, the world around them notices.

Promise of Reward (3:13-18). These verses deal with a separate issue. God accuses his people of speaking against him. In their typical style of denial they ask, "How have we spoken against thee?" (3:13). The balance of these verses deals with the distinction between sincere servants and those who are misguided. Ultimately the righteous are those who serve God and the wicked are those who do not serve him (3:18). God knows the difference! Do we? We should obey God and anticipate his reward by faith.

VanHorn is pastor, First Church, Columbia.

Mississippian attends 'Pole' event in Russia

By Ross Kyzar
Special Correspondent

I have been to several "See You at the Pole" events before, both in America on furlough and in Costa Rica where we lived before, so I thought this would be the same thing.

I was wrong. Now I live in Moscow, Russia, and go to Hinkson Christian Academy. In chapel one morning in September, I heard that we were going to Red Square the next Wednesday to pray for our friends, school, and the government.

It was going to be in the afternoon in Moscow, when it was morning in America and the kids there would be praying at their schools too.

As I was considering going, I didn't think there would be many people there so I didn't know if I really wanted to go. Also, who was going to take

found out that all of my friends were going. I was actually a little excited about going.

As we left school on Wednesday, I was wondering how it was going to be. We walked to the Metro (subway) together having a good time.

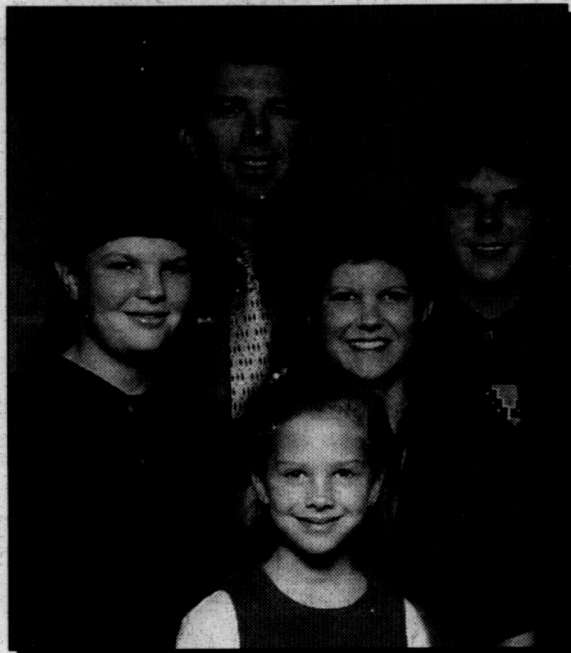
We came out of the Metro and walked to Red Square. I have been there about five times in the two-and-a-half months we've been here, but this time it looked different.

I'm still not sure why. When we got there we sang some songs and were attracting attention from a few people.

Then we sat down to pray.

When we had been sitting for a few minutes, a policeman whistled at us and told us to get up. We later found out that sitting means you are protesting something.

So we stood to pray. When they saw us praying, they



THE KYZARS — (clockwise from top) Russell, Ryan, Melinda, Robyn, and Ross. (BR special photo)

big list and it said what to pray about.

It was a very good time of prayer and Christian fellowship. Afterwards we went to McDonald's and had a good dinner.

I am very glad I went. It was great to be able to pray with friends like that, and I can't wait until next year. I wouldn't have missed this for the world. I will suggest that everyone come next time.

Ross is the ninth grade son of Mississippians Russell and Melinda Kyzar, Southern Baptist International Mission Board missionaries serving in Russia.

HELP!

THEIR CRY OUR CALL

The Week of Prayer for
International Missions
Nov. 30—Dec. 7, 1997

Cultural understanding key in U.S.

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP) — Christians who want to witness and minister in the United States should strive earnestly to understand a variety of people groups, writes Ele Clay in a

new book published by Woman's Missionary Union, "Many Nations Under God: Ministering to Culture Groups in America" (Birmingham: New Hope, 1997).

"God has called our nation to a bold, exciting and somewhat dangerous undertaking: ministry to the nations of the world who live within U.S. borders," declared Clay, who is a freelance writer in Lampasas, Texas.

The book is divided into several chapters that discuss a dozen ethnic cultures in the United States, including Hispanic, Anglo, deaf, Chinese, Korean, Greek, Haitian, Romanian, Russian, Ukrainian, African Americans, and Native Americans.

"We decided to focus on the groups that have primarily been visible during the past 10 to 20 years," Clay explained.

Clay, who served as editor and coordinator of the project, came to the United States as a native of Trinidad-Tobago whose family had relocated to Anguilla.

She led a diverse team of writers, each of whom wrote about his or her own culture.

During the initial planning meeting for the book, the writers developed the approach that characterizes the book's content.

"We decided that each writer would express two things: first, what it is like to be a member of this culture within the United States and, second, how Christians in this nation can effectively reach out to the culture," Clay said.

The aim was to give the writers an opportunity to present the "voice" of their cultures.

"Obviously, each writer can only speak for themselves," Clay acknowledged, "but their voice is helping others understand the culture of which they are a part."

Clay said bringing together a book about various cultures called for delicate handling.

"Culture is always a sensitive subject — anything that has to do with culture, diversity, racism or prejudice," Clay noted.

"We are part of cultures, yes, but we are also unique. We are each individual people God created."

Hoping churches will use the book in their attempts to build bridges to people who need the gospel, Clay said the book can be the subject of a study group within a congregation.

"If the church is in a community with a certain ethnic group, or if the ethnic group is part of their church, they could invite people from the group to be part of the study," she suggested.

"Once we get past that first boundary, we're going to find out it's a lot easier than we thought."

The book is available at Baptist Book Stores and through Woman's Missionary Union Customer Service at (800) 968-7301.

The Jackson Baptist Book Store is located at 6380 Ridgewood Court Drive.



Dear Pen Pal Club,
My name is
Sandra Johnston. I
am 11 years old. I
like karate, crochet-

ing, basketball, AWANA, art, swimming, computers, and horses. I have long brown hair and I'm in the fifth grade. I attend Park Place Baptist Church. I love to write to people and hope to find a pen pal soon.

Please write to:
105 Chalet Strasse
Brandon, MS
39042

Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx
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VZS VO SNI LVZSN VO
CWC IQ WBH QZJDMFBYQ
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QSAIBYSN CIJWZQI VO
SNFBI IBILFIQ, SNWS
SNVZ LFYNSIQS QSFMM
SNI IBILT WBH SNI
WRIBYIA.

KQWMLQ IFYNS: SPV

Clue: Y equals G

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: James Two Five.

JESUS IS BORN

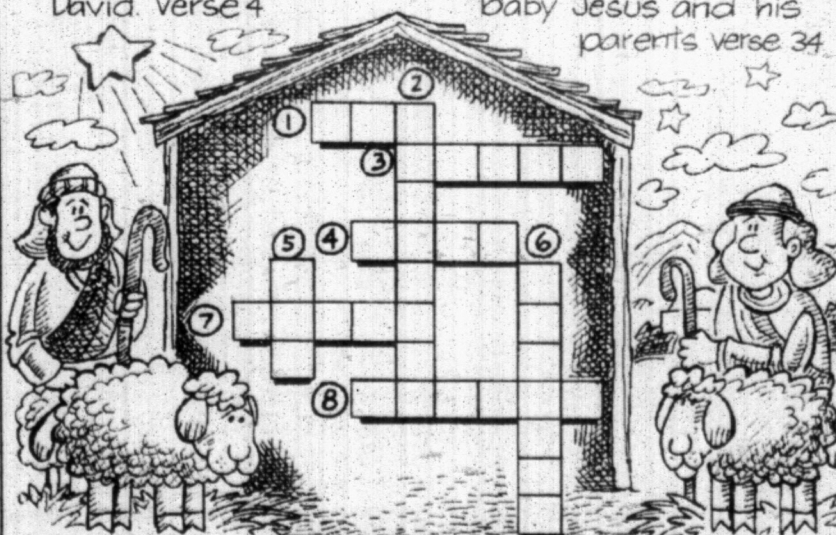
Read about the baby Jesus in Luke 2:1-40

ACROSS

- ① There was no room at the _____ verse 7
- ③ The shepherds saw an _____ verse 9
- ④ Mary wrapped the _____ in cloths _____ verses 6,7
- ⑦ Joseph belonged to the _____ and line of David. verse 4
- ⑧ The angel told them about the birth of _____ verse 11

Down

- ② Joseph and Mary lived in _____ verse 4
- ⑤ Anna thanked _____ when she saw Jesus. verse 38
- ⑥ Simeon _____ the baby Jesus and his parents verse 34



Source: Fun Stuff for Kids by Michael Streff. (Zondervan, 1990), available at your local bookstore or by calling 800-727-3480.